The
COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XLIII December 14, 1945 NUMBER 9

THE WEEK 227
THE CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT George Dean 230
LONDON COMMENTARY J. L. Benvenisti 232
COMMUNICATIONS 235
THE STAGE Kappo Phelan 238
THE SCREEN Philip T. Hartung 238
BOOKS OF THE WEEK 240

Meet Your Ancestors—Soviet Far Eastern Policy 1931 to 1945—The Peacock Sheds His Tail—Mexican Village—Socialism Looks Forward—The Shield of the Valiant—William Howard Taft—Chungking Listening Post—Beethoven—Hercules My Shipmate—Nine Strings to Your Bow—Eastward in Eden

THE COMMONWEAL *is indexed in the Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index and Catholic Bookman. Founded by the Calvert Associates, Inc., in 1924, with Michael Williams as President and Editor.*

Published weekly and copyrighted 1945 in the U.S.A. by THE COMMONWEAL *Publishing Co., Inc.*, 386 *Fourth Avenue*, New York 16, N. Y. ASHland 4-9685. Entered as second class matter February 9, 1924 at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. U.S. $5 a year. Canada and Foreign $6. Single copies 10c.

Editors: EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

PHILIP LE BEAM (*now on duty with the armed forces*) HARRY LORIN BINSSE, *Managing Editor*; C. G. PAULDING, *Literary Editor*; JOHN C. CORT, *Associate Editor*; JOHN BRUBAKER, *Advertising Manager.*

Events Abroad

PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S announcement that he saw no need for a meeting of the Big Three in the immediate future can signify only hopelessness or indifference. There are obviously many matters which must either be thrashed out by the Allies or allowed to settle themselves—the latter a very dangerous way of settling things. There is no sign of any improvement in Chinese affairs; events in Iran bode no good. The atomic bomb, which a lot of us seem mostly to want to forget, is subject to no more control than it ever was. Do-nothing reigns supreme.

One cannot help feeling that here is the basic reason for General Hurley's explosion. He accuses the State Department of all sorts of things, many of which may well be true. But fundamentally the State Department always reflects the temper of Washington—if only because the nation has not yet learned to have any temper on foreign affairs for the State Department properly to reflect. Thanks to the silly and often misinformed barrage of criticism to which that Department was subjected by the "liberal" press during the greater part of the war, and thanks to the disappearance (one hesitates to say the "consequent" disappearance) from that Department of some of the best men it had, we now are possessed of what seems to be no foreign policy whatever. The officials in charge presumably are afraid to have any policy. The minute anything resembling a policy emerges, it is greeted with blasts from one quarter or another—and the turtle rapidly pulls in its head. No wonder the Russians are less and less compromising. They see a spineless and policyless United States and decide they can do whatever they have a mind to.

It is a tragic situation. Those who had most greatly hoped that a peaceful and cooperative world might emerge from the war—and we remain convinced that it might have emerged, may even still emerge—are forced more and more by events to be critical of Russia, but these events occur because our own government lets them occur, encourages the rest of the world to believe that we will not genuinely work with the rest of the world to bring peace and prosperity, to believe that we will mind only our own business and expect the world to mind its. Perhaps it is too much to expect that mankind will not commit suiside; certainly humanity has demonstrated that there has never been a more complete figment of the imagination than "enlightened self-interest."

The Virtues of Decentralization

HOW exaggerated are certain fears over the dictatorial power of union labor is indicated by a report from Washington that General Electric and Westinghouse are abandoning 15 large government-built plants in populous Eastern centers to establish new ones in smaller towns or farther west. The CIO electrical workers' national headquarters charges that this purchase or building of new plants is in "small towns and rural areas where wage standards are low." Disregarding the objective of the companies for the moment, let us examine what this demonstrates in terms of strength. What becomes of labor's vaunted bargaining power if management can end a dispute by folding its tent and moving to greener pastures? Such tactics would seem to constitute a heavy threat particularly during the reconversion period. It is significant that General Electric and Westinghouse have been deadlocked with their employees over wages to the point that a strike vote is currently scheduled.

Many are the virtues of decentralization. Take the United States as a whole. It is unhealthy, both economically and socially, that so much of American heavy industry and finance is concentrated on or near our Eastern seaboard. (We merely hint at the military undesirability of such a concentration.) There is, in fact, much to substantiate the widely popular feeling that the South and West and Far West are in reality colonies—as that term was used by the Manchester economists—of the Eastern United States. Hence a nationwide antagonism toward Wall Street. Bet-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ter geographical distribution of American wealth and factories devoted to turning out finished products is greatly to be desired.

Or take another aspect of the process of decentralization. The great metropolis which has just growed and growed is an unstable grouping of our citizens. When the inevitable depressions come—even minor recessions, as they are at first—there is nothing in a big city to which a laid-off worker can turn his hand. And even when employment is fairly steady there is seldom any feasible way of adding to the family income. The deplorable sociological effects of the concentration in big cities of huge numbers of men dependent for their very livelihood on the ups and downs of the business cycle and on last-resort government doles are too complex to go into here. We shall have to be content with pointing out how preferable it is for any human society to be less proletarianized. We suggest that a breadwinner who is enough in the country to have one foot in industry and the other on the land is in an infinitely better position than his completely urbanized big city cousin.

This is not the first time, of course, that American big business has actually had a hand in effecting considerable decentralization. The Ford Motor Company has long contracted for certain parts from a number of widely scattered small plants in small-town areas. Henry Ford himself has exerted considerable pressure on the workers in his plants to cultivate their own farms and gardens. Nor must we ever forget the tremendous consequences of such phenomena as the transfer of a large portion of the New England textile industry to less developed sections of our South.

To say that decentralization in general is desirable does not mean that shifts such as those of which Westinghouse and General Electric are at present accused are *per se* in the common interest. In fact the results may be the very opposite. If companies cut and run, for instance, what is to become of the laid-off workers? One would think that at long last executives would recognize their responsibilities toward a company's employees. Decentralization, as with every other step by managers of large enterprises, is fraught with social consequences. Business should no longer be permitted to indulge in unilateral acts of such a scope. Major geographical shifts in industry must come only as an integral part of a well prepared plan in which workers, management and the disinterested public have an equitable share. Let us not be fooled if big businesses come out as champions of decentralization.

Labor Legislation

ONE result of the present strikes is to show how ill-advised was the Smith-Connally Act. Presumably its strike vote provision was based on the assumption that the rank-and-file worker never wants to strike and is led to do so by the machinations of wicked labor leaders; if you deprive these leaders of control over decisions to strike, you will eliminate strikes. This theory has been widely held among certain business men, and for years has been the stock in trade of such commentators as Westbrook Pegler. Now we see how thoroughly unsound it was. The great majority of strike votes has shown the rank and file overwhelmingly in favor of work stoppages in order to gain the terms it desires.

The result has been an immediate move to repeal the Smith-Connally Act, with which we should heartily agree were it not that the repealer does not wholly repeal. The Bill now before the House would, specifically, retain and indeed strengthen the prohibitions in the original Act against contributions on the part of unions to political parties and campaigns. This prohibition was one of the most unjust provisions in the original Act, since it gave to wealthy individuals a preponderant weight in financing the electoral activities of candidates for office. The only effective way for workers to make candidates similarly beholden to them is by contributing to their campaigns as a group, as unions. Of course such contributions should be subject to regulation, so as to protect the rights of minority groups of workers who may object to their dues being used for such purposes, but they should never have been prohibited.

The Wagner Act may have its imperfections, but by and large it is admirable and in view of the present mood of Congress, a return to it seems the best way out. If it is to be amended, let us wait until we have a reasonable degree of industrial peace and then approach its amendment in an objective and reasonable way, so that its basic merits may not be stultified through wild attempts to cure a deep-seated disease by slapping the unions down. Nor will "fact-finding" serve as any cure-all.

Bank of England, Bank of France

THE British have nationalized the Bank of England; the French have nationalized the Bank of France; and of course people will say that this is the sort of thing that happens when more or less Leftist governments come into power, that it is one more step toward the socialization of everything, and they will think that it is the same thing which has happened in England and in France. But the interest in this obvious parallelism lies precisely in the fact that beneath it lie profound differences. The French and the British have done the same thing; they have done it for highly different reasons.

In both countries you had these great central

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

banks, so powerful that they could, and did affect governmental political decisions and policy. Neither the French government nor the British could act as they saw fit, take whatever decisions they wanted to take in whatever field, in foreign affairs, in taxation, in social policy, and then simply tell the Bank of England, the Bank of France, what they had decided to do. They could not simply send the bill to their banks. Because the banks might refuse to pay. With the great central banks privately owned that is the situation in theory and practice.

But no matter what you say, nothing happens in England the way it happens in France. In this case there existed in England another element which made the practical relationship between the government and the central bank a relationship that worked whereas in France it did not work. In England the men who ran the central bank belonged to the same clubs as those who ran the government; they were equally devoted to the state; they felt equally responsible to act always in the national interest. The Bank of England and the men who ran it did not feel that the government was one thing, they another, and that their own interests came first.

So that the nationalization of the Bank of England did not do much more than ratify, formally, a situation existing in fact. The Bank of England was already a *national* bank, a bank working for the nation and immediately for the nation's government.

In France, nationalization of the bank has come to save the nation from being dominated by private interests which again and again had proved that they were willing to act against the nation and the nation's government. After a long story of bitter conflict, nationalization now comes to assert the primacy of the governmental function.

It does not matter what parties are in power in France at the present time; they look back at what the banks did to the governments in the period between the two wars: the banks sabotaged the governments. The governments could not govern. So nationalization had to come, or the government of the Fourth French Republic would have had to give up the idea of being a government before even starting to govern.

The Housing Shortage

SURELY it is an irony that the only major belligerent in this war not to have suffered any physical damage from hostilities should be confronted with a housing shortage of titanic proportions. Most of the experts agree that we shall need at least one and a half million more homes next year than we at present have, and we certainly are now short of homes to at least half of that figure. The most optimistic estimate of what private enterprise can build in 1946 is 500,000 homes. So we shall probably be in an even tighter spot at the end of next year than we are now—unless something is done about it. And even by the end of 1947 we shall still have a shortage of major proportions. This situation is frankly intolerable. And there is no reason to believe that the veterans—the section of our population bearing the brunt of the shortage—will calmly accept the necessity of doubling up, of living in shacks and coldwater flats, of postponing marriage or of continuing to live with the old folks. If private enterprise cannot meet the challenge, government will step in, or else we may see direct action of the bonus march type, but on a broader scale.

What prevents private enterprise from joyfully scrambling to supply this eager market? The answer is simple. You cannot get the materials and you cannot get the labor to build with. Or, to be more exact, you can get both only in limited supply. An adequate flow of material is dependent upon achievement of reconversion and the reestablishment of industrial peace—a process none too simple in the light of the present mood of business. As has frequently been pointed out in these columns, the rebates provided under our wartime corporate tax laws inevitably will operate to slow down the reconversion process, since by doing so the average large manufacturer has nothing to lose. Uncle Sam has promised to make good his business losses by handing him back large hunks of the taxes he paid during the war. Only a campaign of exposure can afford us relief in the materials department. As for labor, the building trades, thanks to their apprentice policies, are unable to come near supplying the demand. Here the solution is far simpler, though it will take great courage for any politician to advocate it. The solution is for government, preferably at the state level, to set up training programs in the skilled trades—since the unions will not and perhaps cannot do it on an adequate scale — and supply sufficient inducements, especially to veterans, in order to attract young men to these programs. This activity should be linked by statute to all public housing projects. Results would not be immediately apparent, but in no other way can we meet the terrible need for shelter of millions of our citizens.

Congratulations to the Brooklyn "Tablet"

ALTHOUGH we often find ourselves utterly opposed to the Brooklyn *Tablet* on political issues, we must heartily commend that newspaper's strong campaign for relief to the desperately needy people of Europe. We sincerely hope that every diocesan organ will support this vastly important cause with equal vigor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Central Valley Project

Attempts to defeat its basic purpose

George Dean

A WELL-organized two-front effort is under way to take the Central Valley Project of California from the jurisdiction of the Federal Bureau of Reclamation, which has brought it to its present state of construction, and place it under a state board. For the most part the real proponents of the scheme have remained judiciously in the background, as though their very identities might be a drawback to the success of their campaign. But on the basis of those who would benefit from such a move, the process of elimination narrows the field down to the privately owned utility interests and the landed aristocracy of the state.

The construction of the $360,000,000 multiple-purpose project was undertaken by the federal government in 1935, after the state had voted revenue bonds for the purpose and then proceeded to do nothing about it. To the great interior valley of California, spreading more than 400 miles from Southern California on the south almost to the Oregon line on the north, the project is designed to bring flood control, irrigation, hydroelectric power and improved navigation to the whole area and salt water control to the delta region. It is now about one-half completed, but the construction has advanced to the stage where power has begun to flow from the turbines at the big Shasta Dam.

Irrigation and power are the contentious phases of the project. Under the federal reclamation laws, the benefits from CVP, as with similar undertakings, would be limited to individual land holdings of 160 acres or less. This has been interpreted by the reclamation bureau attorneys to mean that, in the light of the state's rigid community property laws, a man and his wife may own 320 acres. This provision, obviously, is intended to encourage the development of medium-sized family farms and to spread the benefits of the project among as many persons as possible.

Since the pioneer days of Sutter and Vallejo, California traditionally has been a region of vast land holdings. In the early days a man could ride horseback from sunrise to sunset without circumscribing his acreage. These huge land grants have been broken up but in their place have come other great single ownerships—those of land companies, farming corporations and some individuals—especially in the more arid southern half of the basin where orchards, vineyards and vegetable gardens cannot survive without irrigation. The owners of these large holdings need and want CVP water. But they cannot get it under the 160 acre provision of the reclamation law for longer than ten years after the project is put into operation. Repeated attempts to amend the law have proven unsuccessful, notwithing tremendous pressure brought to bear upon Congress.

Moreover, perhaps nowhere else in the United States is such a large area and such a wealthy market so completely dominated by a power monopoly as central and northern California is by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. In a section much larger than many states, it is almost impossible for a householder, merchant or manufacturer to use a kilowatt of electricity without buying it, directly or indirectly, from the P. G. and E. Even in the comparatively few cities, and those small, which have their own distributing systems, the power is bought wholesale from the utility.

Quite understandably the P. G. and E. wants no power to come from CVP unless it is the sole distributor. It does not want its monopolistic position disturbed. It does not want a rate yardstick set up by a government project which is bound to reflect adversely upon its own rates. Consequently the Pacific Gas and Electric Company has fought CVP with every weapon at its command, particularly opposing now the construction of a government transmission line which would carry the power from Shasta Dam, on the headwaters of the Sacramento River, to the centers of population. Without a transmission line of its own, the reclamation bureau would have the Hobson's choice of leaving the power figuratively bottled up at Shasta Dam—serving no one and returning no revenue—or selling it to the P. G. and E. at the company's price.

★

Ironically, a good part of the cost of fighting the government project has been borne by the customers by the simple expedient of charging the bill up to operating expenses. In other words, the customers have been compelled to pay for something against their own best interests.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One phase of the project calls for the pumping of water from the Sacramento Valley into the arid San Joaquin Valley. If the federal transmission line is not constructed, the federal government would find itself in the anomalous position of selling power at a low rate to the P. G. and E. at Shasta Dam and then buying it back—no doubt at a good profit to the utility—in order to operate the pumps. Also, the government would keep on purchasing power from the P. G. and E. for the operation of its vast Mare Island Navy Yard, which is only little more than a stone's throw from the route of the proposed transmission line.

In the case of power, federal law again enters prominently into the picture. Acts of Congress appropriating funds to CVP have carried the wise provisions that preference in the purchase of CVP power shall be given to municipalities and other public districts. One city—Roseville—already has contracted with the Bureau of Reclamation for power. Others are considering similar contracts. Sacramento, which has voted bonds for a public distribution system, also may do so when it is apparent the power is available. Once power begins to flow through the government transmission lines, the monopolistic position of the P. G. and E. will be shattered. No one has any misgivings about that fact.

Already the company is aware of the threat of this competition and has materially reduced its wholesale power rates in order to forestall further encroachment of CVP into its private domain. The company frankly told the state railroad commission that the rate reductions were desired in order to meet the threatened competition of government power. The amounts of the reduction, as pure coincidence of course, have been pretty much in inverse ratio to the distance from Shasta Dam. The less the distance and the greater the likelihood of a city being interested in a contract with the Bureau of Reclamation the greater have been the cuts.

From the point of view of the large land holders and of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, what would be a more simple solution than the transfer of the irrigation and power features of CVP from the federal government to the state? This automatically would remove the project from the burdensome 160-acre provision of the federal reclamation law. It would nullify the preferential clause in favor of public power distribution. More important, it would place the project under a state board which would be more exposed to political pressure of the land barons and the power utility.

It goes without saying that the political influence of these two groups would be proportionately greater with a state board than with a federal agency—especially since the federal administration has been extremely sympathetic to the principle of public power and the state administration has not. This is not hypothesis but is amply supported historically.

★

Recently the campaign for state control has been spearheaded by the California State Chamber of Commerce, the mouthpiece of big business. The Pacific Gas and Electric Company has been a liberal contributor to the state chamber—charging the contributions as usual up to operating expenses. And the statewide water resources committee of the state chamber, which instigated the water and power policy, is studded with names representative of large landholders.

The opponents of CVP have been exceedingly resourceful in finding ways to hamper the public utilization of the project. But it is difficult to see what other obstacles may be thrown up if the transmission line is constructed and the efforts to transfer the project to state control prove unsuccessful. The land barons and the utilities are waging a last-ditch fight—and they are not going to capitulate easily.

The movement for state control has taken form in a resolution introduced in Congress by Representative J. LeRoy Johnson, Republican, of the Third California District. Under its provisions, the Federal Government would turn over the power and irrigation features of CVP to the State for $158,000,000 and advance $200,000,000 more to complete the project. The total sum would be repaid by the State in forty instalments.

Ordinarily such a resolution would be worth less than the paper on which it is printed. In the first place, for the Federal Government to dispossess itself of the revenue-producing features of the project and retain the liabilities—flood control and regulation of stream flow for navigation and salinity control—would be little short of preposterous. And to loan $200,000,000 more to the State would seemingly be compounding an absurdity. Nonetheless the resolution bears close watching. The well heeled lobbies of those concerned—the power utilities and large land interests—are far more articulate in Washington than are the masses who would benefit from public power and family sized farms.

Arguments in behalf of federal disinheritance already have been crystallized. These are: (1) The spade work in planning and designing CVP was performed by the State of California at state expense; (2) CVP differs from other federal reclamation projects in that it lies entirely within a single state.

These arguments are not so much specious; they are not arguments at all. True, the idea of transporting water from the overly rainy Sacramento Valley to the arid San Joaquin Valley

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has long been a dream of many Californians. Hundreds of thousands of dollars of state money were expended in engineering investigations. But it was largely through the influence of the utility interests that the project remained landlocked in the State Engineering Department. More than likely, had not the Federal Government stepped in during the Roosevelt Administration and undertaken CVP, the first spade of earth would still be unturned on Shasta Dam.

The claim that CVP should be a state project because it lies within California answers itself. There is no good reason why the Federal Government cannot provide benefits to the people unless the irrigation canals or power cables happen to cross a state line. If this reasoning were followed, the United States Army Engineers would abandon all their work in behalf of intrastate flood control and navigation improvements —work which, incidentally, California heartily welcomes. Moreover, CVP, even though in one state, will serve a larger geographical area than any other federal reclamation project.

Something new has been added by the opposition of the state chamber in such elements as state rights, "interference in social and cultural activities," a "dangerous welding of economic control and political power," and a threat to free enterprise. These vague but high sounding terms are supplemented by this statement in the chamber's literature: "No one is as much interested in the Central Valley's prosperity and standard of living as are the people and government of California. Why surrender these to the Federal Government? The State Chamber of Commerce believes California is being rapidly pushed into the orbit of TVA social planning, with loss to state's rights and rights of private enterprise."

The people in the Tennessee Valley might not understand what the Chamber of Commerce is talking about.

In a letter to Governor Warren of California, Secretary Ickes stated he would not be adverse to relinquishing the project to the State, provided California feels it has arrived at a financial position where it is able to repay the Government for money already expended and to assume the responsibilities of future developments.

One can feel the Secretary was writing with tongue in cheek. If the development of water resources in the central valleys of California remains in federal hands, the expenditures ultimately will approximate, not $358,000,000 but $1,000,000,000. Besides harnessing the waters of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, the basin-wide conservation plans call for the development of storage and power facilities on numerous tributaries.

Of course, the State of California is financially incapable of assuming an obligation of such proportions. Nor does it appear, even if the financial ability were present, the people of the State as a whole or the Legislature would be sympathetic to such a huge expenditure. For one thing, CVP lies in northern California, the majority of the votes in Southern California. Traditional sectional jealousy, if nothing else, would guarantee the defeat of large scale bond issues, self-amortizing or not, for a project which would primarily benefit Northern California.

Moreover, the utility interests which have been stymied in the Interior Department have demonstrated on innumerable occasions that they have far more influence in the State. Under state jurisdiction, CVP never would attain the full stature which is planned for it. The people would be denied the total benefits they might have enjoyed. The monopolistic position of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company in the area would be perpetuated.

And no less powerful in the legislative halls of the State are the large landowners which, in most instances, is to say the banks and the wealthy land companies. The suspension by Congress of the 160-acre provision as it affects CVP is not merely a state matter. To modify the act with respect to California would be to tamper with the basic reclamation policy of the United States, which has stood since 1902. Congressmen from states where family-sized farms have worked to the benefit both of the individual and the community might not be prone to go along under such circumstances.

If Congress is true to its obligation of providing the maximum opportunities to the greatest number of persons, any proposal to relinquish CVP to the State will be defeated. It should be clear to the least discerning that for the Federal Government to give up CVP would be to shackle its great possibilities of providing a better way of life to those in the interior valleys of California. It would condemn countless persons to being lifelong Joads and would blight the opportunity which otherwise would be offered to returning war veterans to establish themselves on family-sized farms capable of producing for them a comfortable living.

London Commentary

J. L. BENVENISTI

COMMENTS on British affairs which have reached me from America lead me to suspect that the real nature of the recent political changes in Britain is still imperfectly understood. There is above all one fact that it seems very necessary to get clear.

The decision of the British people to go socialist is primarily due to the fact that Britain is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poor and a socialist set-up is the only one that Britain can afford. The British electorate were, for the most part, not conscious of this. All they were conscious of was the obvious record of social failure which characterized twenty years of business government, and they were determined never to submit to anything of that kind again. Undoubtedly their choice was in the circumstances of the case a wise one. Not that the men who governed England in the interwar period were either knaves or fools; they were merely confronted with tasks which they could not accomplish without denying their essential principles.

Surely the issues in this matter are really very simple. In circumstances of great natural abundance private enterprise will work tolerably well and may even work very well indeed in fields where socialized enterprise will not work at all. This last obviously holds good in every matter that concerns the creation of new wants. I am convinced, for instance, that socialized enterprise would never have given us either the motor car, or the vacuum cleaner. The decision to adopt new habits and ways of living depend on unpredictable consumer choice and the social gains deriving from such adoption are paid for by the bankruptcies of innumerable experimenters who have failed to win popular support for the particular novelty they brought to market. Without this practice of costly experimentation, which no socialist state of any kind we are ever likely to experience would ever dare to undertake, the motor car and the vacuum cleaner would never have been made available.

It is, of course, perfectly true that even in circumstances of abundance many great and socially useful capital projects fail to get undertaken in a private enterprise economy because the return is not sufficiently attractive to mobilize very large quantities of capital. But then a wealthy community can get along without such projects. When everybody, for instance, is rich enough to pay for relatively dear electricity one can get along without bothering about the means to secure a fractional cheapening. It is the poor community and not the rich that simply cannot afford to dispense with such economies as these.

The bread and butter function of socialism, therefore, is to get capital projects undertaken which prevailing circumstances make imperative and with which private enterprise, through the nature of its inherent principles, refuses to concern itself, and the efficacy of socialism simply derives from the fact that the State can borrow at two percent and nobody else can borrow at two percent.

But, of course socialism has a much ampler content than this. It has a moral and human element, and it would be folly to deny that the people of Britain, still reacting to the emotional stresses of war, have felt this very strongly indeed. Unfortunately this fine impulse towards justice and equality—for it is this that is socialism's moral essence—has in Britain, as in every other country, failed to be disciplined by a strong sense of reality, and there is a tendency to believe that because the State can serve the cause of social justice in one department it can serve it in every department. Because the State by interfering in a special way in the economic field can slowly help to create a greater amplitude of means, and because a certain amount of self-interested opposition has to be overcome before this can be achieved, there is a tendency to look upon the State as a kind of Saint George who can be called upon to eliminate, by some swift miracle of vindicatory justice, any dragon who happens to be worrying us at the time, even when that dragon is not an intelligent agency at all, but simply the brutal fact of circumstance.

Now, in normal times it would probably have been possible for wise statesmanship to resist this kind of demagogic pressure. But the times have not been normal and this has increased the difficulties confronting the statesmen to a point where a sound solution becomes well-nigh impossible. For the war has had a twofold effect. The suffering which it has brought the British people has enormously intensified their feeling that they are entitled, individually and collectively, to a decent and human standard of existence, as indeed they are. But the war has also reduced very markedly the means of giving them what they so legitimately desire. A highly explosive situation has thus been created and has had to be met by makeshift measures which some of us think are going to be a great deal worse than no measures at all.

★

An excellent instance of all this is the new National Health service which, though almost the entire medical profession is fighting it like men possessed, we are certainly going to have inflicted on us in the near future. But to understand what is happening here you must know something of the existing so-called health services in Britain.

For a generation now we have had a compulsory insurance scheme for all wage-earners whose earnings fall below a certain level, and out of these contributions any doctor who declares himself ready to come into the scheme receives about two dollars a year for every insured person on his books. In return for this he must give his services on demand without further payment whenever the occasion arises.

It is no disparagement to the British medical profession when I say that the service thus given is poor by any civilized standard, and often de-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plorable. The best that can be said about it is that it is probably better than nothing at all. Cases of serious illness are, no doubt, adequately dealt with, but the great mass of intermediate complaints only receive the most perfunctory attention. Nor could it be otherwise; for a doctor who is expected to treat, as some are, a hundred patients in the course of a morning is obviously incapable of giving adequate attention to each individual case.

A slow but steady increment of our wealth might have mended all this by gradually augmenting the number of doctors which the community was able to support per head of the population. In this case the poorest of our people would have been more generously dealt with, while the rest would gradually have risen to the point where they could buy adequate medical services direct, either individually or in free co-operative groups. This fortunate lot has not been our portion, but, as things are, we must still go through the accepted reformist motions, even if they leave us rather worse off than we were before. Hence our proposed medical "New Deal."

Under the new arrangements compulsory contributions are to be raised and to become payable by all income groups, and thousands upon thousands of people who were in the habit of consulting a doctor privately and managing somehow or other to pay for the service they received will be roped in to the compulsory scheme. The result is that large numbers of people will now give up the struggle, seek to get medical attention as insured persons and hope for the best, and the great mass of doctors will tend to depend less and less on their paying patients and more and more on the "capitation grants" paid to them under the State insurance.

Now, I am not going to deny that the scheme has its good sides and that a certain number of people, in particular the hitherto uncovered dependents of wage-earners, whose lack of means has in some cases debarred them from receiving adequate medical attention, will now receive it. But that does not alter the fact that the net result of the scheme will probably be a social loss and not a social gain. The general quality of medical practice will deteriorate, and—what is perhaps the most disagreeable feature of the whole thing—the doctors in order to make both ends meet, will raise their fees for the few paying patients who remain, so that adequate medical attention will become more and more the privilege of the very rich.

A rather similar sort of thing is happening in the field of education. While the war was still on legislation was passed giving free and compulsory education to all up to the age of 16 with a further free and compulsory part-time education up to the age of 18. The scheme was fine and generous in conception and desirable from every point of view. Unfortunately we are not likely to have the means to carry it out for a great many years. But since the public demands that something should be done, and since the principle of equality has somehow or other got to be served, we are going to equalize by leveling down instead of leveling up.

★

Here too I have to give a word of explanation. Free compulsory education before the war was up to the age of 14, but there was a steady flow of pupils from the elementary schools who were given free places in the fee-paying secondary schools (corresponding very roughly to your high schools) from which a large number of them were every year assisted by means of scholarships to enter university.

I do not think that there was any country in the world that had a more effective system of feeding talent from the lower to the upper strata than the one Britain was beginning to develop. It was certainly these secondary schools that made possible the effective officering of our fighting forces during the late war, and very well officered they were. Indeed so cleverly and judiciously was this upgrading done, so completely did the social organism fit the promising child into the station for which it was fitted by its talents that the sheer unobtrusive efficiency of the process produced rather a paradoxical result.

Two or three years ago, as I reported in THE COMMONWEAL at the time, the impression began to prevail that the selection of officers was not proceeding on a democratic basis. I remember very well inquiring about this matter at the time and asking a high ranking officer at the War Office why it was that in the officers' messes which I was visiting as a lecturer I did not seem to be meeting men who were the sons of coal heavers and charwomen. It was as I soon realized a very silly question, for, of course, as the officer smilingly pointed out to me, this was precisely what I was doing. The intelligent boys who had been picked for the secondary schools were naturally the most adaptable and had no difficulty whatever in merging into their new social background and acquiring the speech and manners (which I do not hesitate to say were the better speech and manners) of the higher social group. I never found out to what extent the men who led our forces came of humble parentage, but the proportion was overwhelming and it was the secondary schools that did the job.

But I have not only seen the results of the secondary schools, I have seen the schools at work. I have been given special facilities to do this, and I have not only been impressed by what

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I have seen—I have been inspired. I have seen boldness of experiment, enthusiasm and a real sense of dedication. I recollect in particular one school where the headmaster had in a most extraordinary way contrived to unite the parents with the school in a kind of common effort in education for citizenship. Parents not only took part in dramatic and similar activities of the school, but had lecture courses organized for them in the evenings, so that parents, pupils and school did really form a kind of single organic community. I mention this as an example of the originality and vigor with which these schools were being run.

And now, what is going to happen? In theory everybody is going to have a secondary school education free. In practice this is quite impossible, so we are to have for the next ten years or so a sort of *ersatz* affair. Fees in the secondary schools are being abolished, which makes the "free place" systems meaningless, but on the theory that everybody is to have a secondary school education the various offshoots of the elementary, or as they are now to be called—primary schools—such as the Junior Technical Schools, will have an extra class mortised on to them and will be labeled "Secondary Schools" and the teaching staffs between these and the real secondary schools will be interchangeable. The effect, of course, will be that the essential quality of the secondary schools will be destroyed.

Needless to say the immediate result of all this has already been a rush on the part of any parent who can scrape a few pounds together to get his child into a non-state fee-paying school where he can still get some semblance of an education. This in its turn will inevitably produce a prohibitive raising of fees, so that we shall end up exactly where we shall end up with the new medical scheme. A small body of wealthy people will get a decent education for their children, while innumerable others will get something very inferior to what they would have got before, and the gulf between rich and poor which was being bridged a few years ago by a strong middle class will be wider than ever.

I record these things as a faithful reporter because they are true, but I do so with a sense of profound humiliation that, at any rate in the educational sphere, the spiritual should thus be dependent on the material. But I do want to ram this point home. It is the material that is at the bottom of these things. The British are not going through these antics because they are stupid, spineless, or because they have become the prey of agitators. The British are politically the most mature nation in the world, and they are acting this way because they are poor, and because though poor they are still clinging tragically to the shreds of decent aspiration, to the aspiration towards human equality and brotherhood. There is in such circumstances a certain dignity even in self-delusion, and I ask those who read these lines to realize that these things are part of the price which we are paying for a war the burdens of which have been far from equally distributed.

Communications

THE SIN OF SEGREGATION

TO the Editors: As a realtor working in a highly restricted and segregated neighborhood I have become conscience-stricken at the similarity of our living pattern and that which a Hitler would impose. My wife and I have determined to do all we can to cleanse our community's thinking and doing. You article on "The Sin of Segregation" will be tremendously helpful. For instance I shall send one copy to the National Association of Real Estate Boards, as I take exception to a portion of our code of ethics: "A realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, members of any race or nationality, or any individual whose presence will be clearly detrimental to property values in that neighborhood." Another copy will go to a pioneer Catholic woman in our neighborhood who is very influential. This article by a priest of her Faith should help remove some community hostility when I commit the unpardonable sin of selling to a pigmented family. I have promised a copy to the supervisor of the Methodist churches here. He is a hardhitter for Christian living. Another copy will go to the pastor of our own Presbyterian Church. Thank you for this forthright article. A REALTOR.

LEOPOLD AND THE BELGIANS

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editors: After reading Miss B. Hollants on the monarchical question in Belgium I would like to side with her because I appreciate her loyalty—but it is not possible for me to do so.

I am not qualified to interfere in a Belgian controversy, but as a foreign observer I feel that Miss Hollants's viewpoint is very strictly national. She takes into no consideration the danger presented to the cause of the Allies by the fact that King Leopold preferred to remain in Belgium as a hostage instead of leaving his country in order to side with the Allies—as, under identical circumstances, did other rulers.

The moral and constitutional reasons given in defense of King Leopold are not peculiar to his case. In almost every constitution of the last century the king is designated as the chief of the Armed Forces in the same way as the president of the United States is. But neither king nor president is obliged to command the army on the field, to sign the surrender or the armistice, or to place himself in the hands of the enemy as a hostage. Leopold did so, even against the opinion of his government and without asking the English and French governments' opinion.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The main question is: Did or did not Leopold contribute to weaken the cause of the Allies at a critical moment by giving himself to the enemy? Moreover, if the Belgian Cabinet had abided by the king's decision and had agreed to remain in Brussels, Belgium would have ceased being a combatant on the Allied side; no Vleschower (the only minister approved by Miss Hollants) would have had the opportunity of organizing the resistance of Belgian Congo; no other ministers and representatives of Belgium in exile would have had the possibility of rallying all the forces abroad and of organizing the Belgian navy and army units (small or large) on the Allied side.

Fortunately, the Belgian Cabinet ("after extensive wanderings," as Miss Hollants points out) decided to go to England and to fight for the Allied cause. To those ministers and deputies and all Belgian refugees must go the gratitude of England and Belgium itself, as well as that of all those who (as the writer) in those days, were for the Allied cause.

I am sure that if Leopold had followed the example of the others and had left Belgium, the French President would have had more strength to resist Pétain and Laval days were for the Allied cause.

The truth about those tragic days in Belgium and in France is that the majority of the people (Leopold included) thought that Germany had won the victory and England was on the eve of defeat. In such a defeatist atmosphere, King Leopold decided to save his people and Marshal Pétain to save the French people. But Pétain, as a politician, went further—he accepted the armistice and reformed the state during the armistice period. Sure as he was of final German victory, King Leopold, instead, passively resisted the enemy until he was deported. In such a manner only, the king indirectly helped the formation of the Belgian resistance.

It is only now, after Allied victory, that the case of Leopold is a Belgian affair. LUIGI STURZO.

We cannot agree that the "main question" is whether or not Leopold weakened or did not weaken the case of the Allies at a critical moment. The entire question concerns the King's intentions in surrendering his army and in remaining with his defeated people. When this question first was raised a very brave American, the late John Cudahy, faced an hysterical and uninformed public opinion and in a famous article in Life, *defended the King. For his courage he was called a nazi. We believe that he was right about Leopold; in the years that since have passed we have seen no evidence to show that he was wrong; Miss Hollants in her article states that the Belgian people have not lost faith in the King. Since publishing her piece we have received corroboration of her views from reliable sources.* THE EDITORS.

ROSE HAWTHORNE LATHROP

Westminster, Md.

TO the Editors: Last September you were so kind as to publish a letter from me in which I asked anybody who had letters or other information regarding Rose Hawthorne Lathrop (Mother Alphonsa of the Servants of Relief of Incurable Cancer) to write to me. As a result of that appeal, which was also published in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, I did obtain some useful details, or was provided with hints as to where these might be obtained. Some people, however, so I discovered, supposed that, because I said I was specially anxious to obtain fuller material regarding the middle years of this life—roughly from 1870 to 1895—I could have no interest in its earlier or later phases. This of course is not the case. In particular I would be most grateful to anybody able to supply copies of *Christ's Poor,* a little magazine edited and almost entirely written by Mother Alphonsa during 1902-4. Of this even the Sisters at Hawthorne, N. Y., do not possess a complete file. And any of the letters she wrote to possible benefactors or to the press would be most useful to me in the writing of her life. Rose Hawthorne Lathrop was a great keeper of the letters she received but she seems rarely to have kept copies of any that she wrote.

It might well be, too, that information regarding her husband, George Parsons Lathrop, might put me on the track of what I am looking for. He was closely associated with her in the founding of the Catholic Summer School at New London, Conn., at the time they were living there. Bibliographical data concerning her many poems and articles and short stories would be equally handy. On all these points I have a good deal of information, but I could never have too much.

Finally I may say that if people have letters with whose originals they do not wish to part, I would be satisfied with a careful and accurate transcript. But those who do send me originals will get them returned. The fact that the Sisters at Hawthorne have entrusted to my keeping the diaries kept by Mother Alphonsa and her first associate and successor, Mother Rose, will, I hope encourage others to show a little of the same trust. In my present situation it is only with the help of Rose Hawthorne Lathrop's friends that I can hope to do justice to her wonderful life.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

SOCIALISM AND SOCIALISM

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I found Father George H. Dunne's article in the November 23 issue of THE COMMONWEAL not only enlightening but heartening. While Father Dunne was primarily concerned with the situation in Europe, I am sure that he would agree that the United States also requires cooperation between Catholics and Socialists if slavery and tyranny are to be avoided.

I was rather surprised to find that Father Dunne's article failed to point out that the Socialist Party, U.S.A. has never adhered to any anti-religious doctrines. The American Socialist Party has always insisted that religion is a private matter for the conscience of each person to decide, not a question of Party belief. It was in the forefront of the fight against the Ku Klux Klan to defend the rights of Roman Catholics as well as of Jews and Negroes. Moreover, thousands of sincerely religious

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Christians have always been active in the work of the Socialist Party and have been among its leadership.

Socialists have opposed certain actions of the Church —both Catholic and Protestant—when such actions violated principles of democracy and freedom. We have criticized support of Fascist Franco against Republican Spain by much of the Catholic clergy and attacks upon unions by some fundamentalist Protestant ministers. But I am sure that many Catholics would also agree with these criticisms.

We have steadily resisted dominance of any church, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, or Protestant, over the state or over a political party. Equally we have opposed political dominance over any church. We certainly desire to win the collaboration of Catholics in the building of a democratic Socialism based on social ownership and democratic management of the mines, utilities, banks and heavy industries.

We want more private ownership, not less, of the consumers goods people need for a decent life—homes, clothing and food. As Father Dunne eloquently points out, it is capitalism that has been driving more and more men into the ranks of the propertyless.

In some European countries a long history of theoretical and practical conflict on ecclesiastical issues may make difficult a common membership of Socialists and Catholics in one party. But even there, as Father Dunne points out, cooperation has been possible. In Great Britain, however, the Labor Party, avowedly Socialist, has a higher percentage of Catholic members than any other party, and in Canada the Church no longer places obstacles in the way of Catholic membership in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, according to Father Dunne.

In the United States the Socialist Party is ready and eager to work with Catholics and men of all races and religions in the building of a better world. We welcome your help.

HARRY FLEISCHMAN,
National Secretary,
Socialist Party, U.S.A.

Saskatoon, Sask., Canada

TO the Editors: I have just read Father Dunne's article, "Socialism and Socialism." It is a magnificent contribution and, to my mind, the most significant and constructive piece of work on this subject that modern Catholic thought has produced. In the historical circumstances of the moment, it is much more significant for Canada than for the USA because socialist thought in Canada has crystallized itself in the form of a dynamic young political party—the CCF. Here in Saskatchewan, as you know, the CCF came into power with a sweeping landslide victory in 1944. Before the election the Liberals held 47 seats in the provincial legislature and the CCF 5. After the election the CCF held 47 seats and the Liberals 5.

For this reason the "Catholic-Socialist" enigma which Father Dunne analyzes so well is a matter of critical import both to the Catholics and the Socialists of Saskatchewan. As you can well imagine, the situation here is so confused that it is tragic.

It so happens that I chose as a subject for a Ph.D. dissertation in sociology which I am preparing for the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., the following: "The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation: A Sociological Analysis of Its Origins and Ideology." I spent eight months and traveled over 8,000 miles in Canada investigating the CCF. I have exhausted all the original source materials and have interviewed practically all the leaders of the movement.

Both you and Father Dunne will be interested to learn that my investigation substantiates to the fullest degree the observations and conclusions which Father Dunne makes. While in Vancouver, B. C., last May I had occasion to set down in writing some of my findings on this point. It is interesting to note how strikingly parallel they are to Father Dunne's analysis:

> Even here [Vancouver] in this hotbed of Marxist Socialism, the CCF does not conform to that brand of "Socialism" condemned by Leo XIII and Pius XI. The Marxian has been tempered and modified by the influx into the movement of the Social Reconstruction Party, the Co-operatives, non-Marxist farmers, trade unionists, etc. They do not deny the right to private property: on the contrary they aim to eradicate those forces which, under Capitalism, have undermined and trampled on that very right. They do not advocate the overthrow of the existing order by violence or force. They are democrats to the core and, from the beginning have engaged in a pitched battle with Communists on this fundamental point. And so far as the materialistic conception of society is concerned, they cannot even qualify as "socialists" here. In fact, they are in spirit and truth much *closer* to the *ideal* of a Christian Social Reform party than anything Canada has yet produced.
>
> The mentality of most Catholics I have met across Canada, including the clergy, is infected with a terribly distorted view of the CCF *reality.* The result is that Catholics generally are afflicted by a deep-rooted, though unconscious, prejudice against the CCF. It is virtually identical with the kind of prejudice against Catholics found in the typical Ontario Protestant of twenty years ago. Catholics by and large condemn the CCF for something it is not: they are enslaved by the tyranny of a single word—"socialism." If I may generalize on the fairly large sample I have interviewed across the continent, then *the overwhelming majority of Catholics are unconsciously banded together in a compact political unity based on an illusion.* (I suspect that this is not true of Nova Scotia due mainly to the enlightened leadership given the people by the priests of St. Francis Xavier University.) The result is that *Catholics tend to fall into a mold of political and economic thought quite out of line with that of the encyclicals.* Enslaved mentally by the tyranny of that awful word, they are virtually forced to devour with avidity all the "anti-socialist" propaganda dispensed so generously and freely by the forces of reaction. And we come to the sad and tragic paradox where we find that Canadian Catholics, by and large, *have divorced themselves from those constructive and creative forces about which Maritain has written so well, and which are the only hope we have of winning the peace.* Outside of Joe Burton of Humboldt [Sask.] there is not a single Catholic in a place of influence or leadership in the Saskatchewan-Alberta-British Columbia CCF movement. With rare exceptions the same is true all across Canada. *The influence of Catholic leadership, both clerical*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and lay, and a considerable portion of the Catholic vote are thus spent in prolonging what Maritain has called the agony of the modern world.

So convinced am I of the truth of this analysis that I have recently become a member of the CCF and am ardently and publicly supporting it. This is a serious shock indeed to the political (and even moral!) sensibilities of many devout Catholics. But leadership by example is much more powerful than leadership by preaching. I hope in this way to teach them on which side of the political and economic arena they belong in the impending struggle for economic freedom and justice which will shake the very foundations of our political and economic institutions in Canada and the United States.

Please send me 150 copies of the reprint of Father Dunne's article, which I am sure you will make. I want to use it as a *text* in my classes at this University.

The Reverend EUGENE CULLINANE, C.S.B.

The Stage & Screen

The Day Before Spring

AT ONE point in John C. Wilson's musical offering, everyone in the audience woke up: one of the protagonists was down-stage-front, reading the novel which formed the basis of the plot and which also held a number of highly important emotional clues for him. Stage-center was occupied by the two characters about whom he was reading. In a fairly frenzied state, he kept re-reading, skipping, returning to the same passage of description, interpolating, searching new answers, while the center-people accurately acted out his findings, including all the repetition. The business occurred late in the work, took perhaps six minutes and constituted certainly the only portion of hilarity in the entire pie—(higgledy piggledy, here we lie!). I mention it only as one evidence of imagination in an evening of money.

However, there are also evidences of care and editing on view at the National. As producer, Mr. Wilson has built the piece around a book and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner, music by Frederick Loewe, costumes by Miles White, and a most tedious, pretentious, derivative ("Carousel") ballet by Anthony Tudor. The story concerns a college reunion at which a young wife discovers that she may have mischosen her successful young husband, a businessman, in lieu of the class's novelist, whose just-published, best-selling book stars her as heroine of an early love affair.

The thing patently indicates satire, and there are some manifestations of it in the campus doings, but not nearly nor pointedly enough. And another thing the piece demonstrates, at least to me, is the incongruousness of the operetta technique when applied to everyday life without some high, wild, quizzical slant. It may be prejudice, but the prospect of a first curtain displaying a girl sitting alone in a squeezed modern flat reading a book, and subsequently bursting into a solo called, "The Day Before Spring," while her subsequent husband indulges only in speech, in spite of the fact that his subsequent friend gives with a roaring ditty titled, "The Invitation," all mixed with the necessary amount of expository talk and introduction—this prospect seems to me awfully damn silly and embarrassing.

Robert Davison's very poor, busy, badly lit sets may have had something to do with this reaction, but I do not really think so. And I suspect the movers of the piece to have had a similar feeling, since every tune is carefully broken (delayed) by dialogue, thereby making all the vocal numbers, however singable, vastly too long. Mr. Wilson has fangled a clean, handsome, competent show, but in spite of the bit of delightful invention mentioned at the start of this column, there is nothing awaking nor unboring about it. It comes off as business rather than brain.

In the rôle of the college Myrna Loy, I thought Patricia Marshall pretty skilful, and Tom Helmore as the "Bones" of the biz, held the house throughout. My only criticism of him will be that he was far more on the stage than in the play, but in spite of this wicked circumstance, I should say he comes off as the "cute apple" of the season so far. John Archer, Irene Manning, Bill Johnson, severally fitted. (*At the National.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

The Power of the Movie

NO ONE is particularly shocked anymore to be told that movies influence our lives. There are plenty of examples besides the obvious ones (like Clark Gable and the underwear; or Shirley Temple curls) that illustrate how popular films, with the help of the stars in them, create mode and even make a dent in current thought. Therefore it is quite understandable that educators and religious leaders deplore certain tendencies in the screen's trend and approve other efforts that are bound to have influence in the right direction. Right now mentors *and* audiences are applauding the Frank Sinatra short *"The House I Live In,"* which succeeds in being entertaining while putting over its message against intolerance.

Indeed you may be a bit surprised, during one scene when Frankie is persuading a group of kids to stop tormenting the youngster who has been their victim, at hearing him say that religion makes no difference except to a nazi or a dope! Scriptwriter Albert Maltz slipped a little there and didn't really put into Sinatra's mouth the words he intended. This is another of the dangers of over simplification. But the short itself has its heart in the right place and deserves a hand as a sincere effort on the part of a phenomenally popular idol, backed up by socially conscious film makers, to combat a growing evil. The profits on this short, by the way, are to go to organizations working on the problems of juvenile delinquency.

You won't be surprised, of course, to learn that *"Appointment In Tokyo,"* an hour-length documentary, is a powerful film. Made by the Army Pictorial Service

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Signal Corps, this picture reviews our four-year war in the Pacific. While some of the shots have been seen before, many are new and include formerly unreleased Japanese footage. The whole has been well edited into a historical document that should be a must on everyone's list now, and will no doubt continue to be shown, in years to come, to anyone interested in studying our strategy and tactics in the Pacific. Battle sequences, well aided by maps, diagrams and sound track, vivify the place names from Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, to the surrender ceremonies aboard the *Missouri* on September 1, 1945. Corregidor, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Kwajelein, Saipan, Leyte are now names in history, but it was the fighting at these places, the men who died and the men who survived that gave these names new and broader significance. The film recalls the whole campaign and it is dedicated to these men. Although "Appointment In Tokyo" lacks the personal touch and intimate detail that made "The True Glory" a masterpiece of documentary film interpretation, and although its script is at times somewhat flossy and contrived, "Appointment" succeeds through its well chosen visuals in helping us understand the meaning behind phrases like: "Battle won" and "Beach head secure." Wainwright, Nimitz and MacArthur appear in the film and so do many, many soldiers, sailors and marines. War is planning, wading through mud, fighting in jungles as much as it is death and victory.

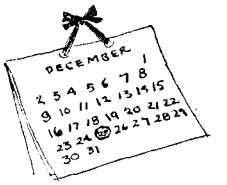
Here is a film that pays tribute to all the fighters and rightfully emphasizes the price paid by the Filipinos. The final scenes on the *Missouri* are an unforgettable and stirring ode in cinema and a fitting close to this record of democracy's triumph.

Perhaps this week's most powerful expression of democracy in action is the new March of Time, which epitomizes in its two reels a symbol of justice after the tumult and shouting are over. In its opening sequences, *"Justice Comes to Germany"* quickly sums up the years 1933 to 1945 when no individual rights prevailed under nazi rule. Then the film gets down to its main business: the trial of Franz Strasser (accused of murdering an American airman and prisoner of war) in a US Military Tribunal.

The rigid formalities of military law are observed. What you see and hear through pictures and sound track, the testimony of witnesses, the efforts of the interpreter (an earnest young corporal) to be exact in his choice of words as he sits beside the accused and carefully translates phrase by phrase, the reactions of Strasser, in fact the whole court procedure is fascinating to watch. Strasser, found guilty of shooting in cold blood an unarmed prisoner who was not attempting to escape, shows no emotion as he is condemned to die. Wisely the film makes no attempt to editorialize. Without embellishment the pictures and recorded voices speak of the sincerity and fairness of US military justice. We are impressed with this facet of the democratic way. The movies again deserve applause for their value in illustrating it.

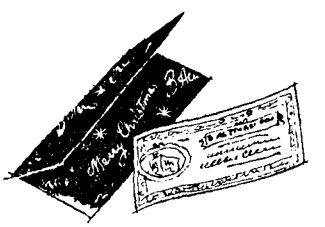
PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

B. ALTMAN & CO.
FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK



it's good today

it's good tomorrow



AN ALTMAN GIFT CERTIFICATE

It fits everybody! It gives them their choice of everything in this whole, beautiful gift store. Gift Certificates, main floor

also at our East Orange and White Plains shops

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books of the Week

Meet Your Ancestors: A Biography of Primitive Man. Roy Chapman Andrews. Viking. $3.00.

THE WORK purports to be a streamlined version of "what is known to date from actual specimens, about the physical development, home life, and environment of primitive man." The introductory chapters attempt to show that the modern apes are man's relatives but not his ancestors. The major part of the volume is devoted to the important finds of skeletal remains—Australopithecus; Java; Peking; Piltdown, Rhodesian and Heidelberg, grouped together; Neanderthal; Cro-Magnon; "the first Americans." A final chapter describes man of the future as he may look a half a million years from now.

Many of the best sources are drawn upon and descriptions of the actual discovery of the bones of our "ancestors" are enlivened by reference to personal experiences of the author when visiting the sites. One of the aims of the book is to impart to young people the author's own enthusiasm for adventure and excitement in hunting for primitive remains in odd corners of the globe. The chapter on cave exploration is excellent as is also the one detailing the difficulties in natural environment with which Neanderthal man had to cope. Unfortunately, however, in seeking for effect Mr. Andrews frequently oversteps the bounds of scientific accuracy as in stating that Cro-Magnon was "tall, *blonde* [italics mine], and handsome," to give but a single example. Such slips are annoying, but in addition the style is often strained and in the reviewer's opinion the attempts at wit usually fall quite flat.

The reader should be warned moreover that there are two basic though unwarranted assumptions made by the author: (1) that mental evolution accompanies bodily evolution simply and mechanically, and (2) that the polygenetic origin of the human race is an established fact. In view of the complex and highly controversial nature of some of the questions involved in the ever-growing body of scientific evidence bearing on human bodily evolution, it would seem only fair that one who presents this material to the public should stick scrupulously to the facts and, in stating conclusions from the facts, should indicate clearly which are scientifically probable, which are possible, which are tentative only, and which are highly imaginative. In this the author often fails. The resulting hodgepodge of fact and fancy is more likely to confuse than to enlighten the unsuspecting reader.

REGINA HERZFELD.

Soviet Far Eastern Policy: 1931-1945. *Harriet L. Moore. Princeton.* $2.50.

WINSTON CHURCHILL helped the average man not at all by his explanation of Soviet policy as a riddle inside of an enigma wrapped in mystery. Owen Lattimore makes simple good sense in his introduction to Miss Moore's book by a definition of what she is trying to do in it. He calls attention to the difference between an *enigma* and a *problem*: "An enigma is an unintelligent riddle which can perhaps be guessed, but cannot be solved. A problem is a complex of known and unknown factors which can be analyzed . . . and eventually solved by working from the known to the unknown." That process has in it something of an algebraic equation. If there are too many unknowns there is no equation. Miss Moore has set down the political facts which she draws mainly from Russian sources. It is carefully done but it does not equate in the sense of conclusions which are immediately intelligible to the average man and the average man is fundamentally important—he is basic to world civilization and world peace. But we are all engaged in analyzing factors of international policy in technical political terms without consideration of the human basis upon which they all rest.

In "policy-making" (which is an incorrect term for a real thing) one can and should set down the factors correctly, in writing, for closer study. The next step is to take the "blue-print" and set up machinery to make the plan workable, remembering always that all this remains only machinery with which to achieve a given result; for machinery does not function automatically. It does not operate in a vacuum or without motive power.

This motive power flows from the people of a nation in their relations with the people of another nation. There is no mystery whatever about that, but it is a formidable problem; for constructive permanency can only flow from that source, not from any individual or restricted group of individuals. It is idle to discuss international policy as having any other source of meaning, yet everyone who does discuss it does so in terms of the irresponsible personal sovereignty of the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. Even our own American attempts at policy-making are made as an evanescent emanation of the personal sovereignty of the Executive of our American federal union of states. Since we are the only people in the world who have deliberately and knowingly set up our constitutional government on the exact opposite principle, and since we are practically all ignorant of these facts, we do not and cannot achieve anything permanently constructive.

Analysis of Soviet policy should, therefore, as a preliminary, take in the two apparently incompatible facts of the source of Soviet policy and the source of American policy. There is no mystery, no riddle, no enigma—only a problem: how to make two incompatibles work coherently and constructively for the common good of all. Factual reports of international events are useful if correctly interpreted. Any underlying policy producing such events is intelligible only on the basis of the human persons who are the motive power of the political machinery, set up to achieve a purpose. All international organizations for any purpose are machinery; nothing more than that. When that is understood there are never too many unknown factors in the eventual algebraic equation. One such factor in over-all Soviet policy of which Miss Moore (or Owen Lattimore, or Winston Churchill) seems to me no more conscious than any other American writer is the fact of George Chicherin's blue-print for Russian imperialism, accepted and approved by Lenin, and instrumented, step by step, by Stalin.

George Chicherin was what many of our older State Department men used to call "a frustrated diplomat." He had a one-track mind extremely irritating to the imperial bureaucracy—which, in turn, he abhorred utterly. He was not even mildly interested in the Russian revolution, in Marxian Communism, or in the Bolshevik Communist Party. He was interested only in the integration of Russia to be the dominant power in the world. So, with an impatient shrug and maybe a sneer, he allowed Trotzky to enroll him as a party member. Before he died

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lenin, Trotzky and Stalin had set up the machinery for carrying out the details of his blueprint. If one happens to have known the men concerned, it is possible to follow the pattern through every political event that has happened or is likely to happen in the near future, without too much aberration.

The basic fact of it all, becoming apparent today, is that permanently constructive building of world civilization and world peace depends now on the peoples of the world, and not primarily on its leaders. It depends primarily on the internal *strength* of peoples, not primarily on their physical power, for mere power can be used for any purpose, and can be abused as well as used. Unless I am entirely wrong in the decades of my personal knowledge and experience of Russians, the "policy" of the Soviets is, first: to build themselves to be the most scientifically developed people in the world, and second: Russians are the only people who have begun to understand that foreign policy is inseparable from domestic policy, since both are twin parts of the same thing, i.e., the needs, aspirations and will of a people in their relations with another people. Therefore, their foreign policy consists in permitting no one to interfere with their domestic policy outside their own borders. Russians, today, are tough-minded people. They do not fear tough acts by others and are contemptuous of tough words. They are not impressed by other people's words; only by acts. As things have begun to settle down out of the discordant ideologies of several of the early leaders ("settle down"—i.e. "liquidation") men like Stalin have become aware that Russians can get along with other tough-minded people, even if they diverge very radically, but never with people who do not know what they want nor how to have it. Soviet Russians know what they want, how to get it, and mean to have it; but they can get along with any other people equally determined. That is the problem. There is no mystery about it. No book is very good which does not make that clear to the satisfaction of the average man. WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

The Peacock Sheds His Tail. Alice Tisdale Hobart. Bobbs. $2.75.
Mexican Village. Josephina Niggli. North Carolina. $3.00.

THE criterion of the many is the altitude a book achieves on the best seller list, so I am going out on a limb in expressing a preference for one of two recent books on Mexico. "The Peacock Sheds His Tail" is by an established writer of sugar-coated contemporary history in fictional form; "Mexican Village" is a first novel. Mrs. Hobart's book smells of research and ties its plot to several of the quaint customs about which she has heard. Her villain is *privilege,* with a discreet, oh, very discreet sideswipe at the Church as its handmaiden. She goes all out on the subject of the Sinarquistas as a perfectly safe scapegoat, linking them to Germany and Spain, and portraying them as a sort of Mexican Ku Klux Klan. Superimposed on this background is a marriage between a young American diplomat and a Mexican girl from an old, conservative family, shaken well and spiced with social significance. Miss Niggli's book is based on a much deeper knowledge of the country. Laid in the Sabinas Valley in the northern part of the country instead of in the capital, its flaws spring from too much sentimentality. She writes in a golden haze of days remembered and a slight confusion arises from her dividing the book into ten separates tales, more or less overlapping in time, although the device plus Miss Niggli's own feeling for Mexico give the book a folk quality and authenticity that Mrs. Hobart lacks. Except in its final pages, "The Peacock Sheds His Tail" has the deftly woven plot of the professional storyteller but it is a United States idea of Mexico and what ought to be done about it. The "plots" of the ten tales in "Mexican Village" arise so inevitably from the characters portrayed that we have a sense of classic drama or comedy in spite of the tendency to be overidyllic. But here are two books about that country of complexities, where one civilization was forcibly imposed on another, where the old religion is not completely dead, a country struggling with inertia, illiteracy and the attempts of each succeeding party to perpetuate itself once it has achieved power.

NORAH PIPER.

Socialism Looks Forward. John Strachey. Philosophical. $2.00.

THERE'S nothing new in this little primer, pabulum for the forty-three million propertyless Englishmen who, Strachey says, are exploited by the remaining four millions. It aims to get their aid in the gradual socialization of Britain through active membership in the Labor Party, the trade unions and the cooperatives.

How mild and moderate many of these pages seem! If one read only the latter half, omitting the Marxian diagnosis which precedes it, one might be tempted to put Mr. Strachey a bit to the right of Father George Dunne. One remembers, incredulously, an effort made by certain patriots to have Strachey barred from entering this country to lecture. It's a little like reading, today, the 1932 platform of the Socialist Party of the United States.

Some of the economic premises are, however, still crudely Marxian or Malthusian, and dogmatic. One of the most important is that, however much labor produces, it will get—unless it struggles and organizes—no higher pay. Wages will not rise above the cost of producing labor, the cost of keeping a man or a woman "in a fit state" to do a certain amount of work and to produce another man or woman capable of doing the job in the next generation. Mechanization keeps the demand for labor from rising to the point of labor scarcity, full em-

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL
Showplace of the Nation Rockefeller Center
A captivating film abounding with unforgettable song, irrepressible laughter, tender sympathy.
BING CROSBY
INGRID · BERGMAN
in Leo McCarey's
"The Bells of St. Mary's"
Henry Travers • William Gargan
Released by RKO Radio Pictures
THE MUSIC HALL's GREAT CHRISTMAS STAGE SHOW—"THE NATIVITY," Celebrated Yuletide pageant . . . and "HEIGH HO," delightful holiday fantasy . . . produced by Leonidoff. Symphony Orchestra, direction of Charles Previn.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ployment, a higher than subsistence wage. Under the existing economic system the "rising production of wealth will have no tendency, even, to raise [wages]." In repeating this again and again he rather disingenuously implies that collective bargaining is a thing apart from the capitalistic system.

Surplus value, the "difference between what the worker is paid in wages and the amount of value he has added to the raw material," goes to the employer, who contributes nothing to value. This difference is what the "non-workers"—the four million exploiters—live on.

The war proved that British production could be enormously increased — two-thirds of the wartime effort "could end all poverty in Britain." But before the war from 12½ to 25 percent of British workers were permanently idle, and 13½ millions out of forty-seven were, acording to the Orr report, gravely undernourished. Wartime production was socialist production, Strachey argues. In peace wages will again tend to the subsistence level, and, since productivity is enormous, mass unemployment is inevitable—unless we socialize. If, in the capitalist economy, employers are forced by collective bargaining or otherwise to raise wages above subsistence levels, profits cease to be adequate, and this will "stall" the system, cause a slump, just as inexorably as a deficiency of purchasing power.

Inadequate home markets force capital and goods abroad. Exports lead to imperialism and imperialism to war. War is the final, inevitable result of the capitalist economic organization.

The latter half of the book is exhortatory but in a vague, pacific way. The shape of socialist things to come never emerges clearly. If this book had the authority of Labor Party sponsorship, the title might with justice be amplified: "Socialism Looks Forward—Through a London Fog." One looks in vain for a schedule of gradual nationalization of British industries, for a discussion of what reforms ought to be tackled first and why, for a charting of obstacles and perils, for a mouthwatering description of British socialism's expected fruits in the form of improved living standards. The forty-three millions are told little except that they should join the party, the trade unions and the cooperatives and in the end they will possess their land and its factories.

The appeal for support of trade unions is not consistent with the author's contention that in the capitalist economy efforts to raise wages above the subsistence level are bound to induce a slump—not consistent, that is to say, unless the unions are intended actually to be political cadres.

Mr. Strachey should bring the case for socialism up-to-date. Few will accept his subsistence theory of wages, or agree that wages cannot be raised to much higher levels without slump. If you start from depression, larger sales volumes induced by generally higher wages should mean greater profits. Strachey argues, but does not demonstrate statistically or otherwise, that profits are greatest when consumption is at the lowest possible level and there is much unused capacity.

Essential qualifications are sometimes buried, annoyingly, in footnotes. For example, the four millions who had incomes above five pounds per week—no more—before the war are often accused of exploiting the forty-three millions, but once in a footnote Strachey says he means, rather, "that minority of the four million which owns really appreciable amounts of capital."

It is rather surprising to read that the share of wages and salaries in British national income was 50 percent in 1860 and, despite taxes, 40.5 percent in 1935. Similar figures for this country would be about 52 percent or higher in 1899 and 67 percent in 1935.

GEORGE DOHERTY.

The Shield of the Valiant. August Derleth. Scribners. $3.00.

THE best thing in "The Shield of the Valiant," August Derleth's eighth novel in his "Sac Prairie Saga," is the portrayal of himself in the writer, Steve Grendon. Or rather, it is the extraordinary bifocal vision provided by Steve's presence, which enables the reader to see at one and the same time what the author intended to do and how he does it.

Steve walks the streets of Sac Prairie at night and is quiveringly sensitive to the human drama going on behind every lighted window. He is filled with despair because one lifetime will not be long enough in which to capture in books the pulsing life of everyone he knows. "The Shield of the Valiant" is exactly the kind of book such a man would write. The multiple activity of the Sac Prairie people is held together by the story of Rena and Kiv, who love each other. They experience from Kiv's father and mother all the ordinary obstacles offered by ambitious parents to sons who wish to marry beneath their social level. In the end, Rena's long-delayed acceptance of Kiv is so irritatingly unmotivated that one feels it to be postponed only in order to permit the working out of other things in the book.

And these other things are the best things—the flow and flavor of life in a midwest village. The thoughtful interpretation of these comes through Steve, who is the real center of interest. He is haunted by the mystery of time, rebellious against the mutability of things. He is sensitive to the loneliness of the creative artist and knows the mystery of the different planes on which people live. He is filled with horror at the evil of village gossip, the tragic consequences of which are memorably dramatized in the book, and yet Steve is able to understand sympathetically the frustrations which make people gossip. He is unafraid to call Father Peitch to time publicly for slandering a teacher and for hurling wholesale condemnation at the University of Wisconsin. To him Sac Prairie is a world worthy of tenderness, pity, wisdom.

All of this adds up to something which ought to be great or nearly great. But the book is neither. The reader is continually disappointed, because among all Mr. Derleth's gifts there was not included one blue pencil. He overwrites. He analyzes situations with banal insistence upon expository remarks which are entirely unnecessary. He tells the same thing several times. This novel could be reduced from 511 pages to 400 without omitting a single incident and be enormously strengthened by such excision.

Perhaps the really great book in the "Sac Prairie Saga" will be written when Mr. Derleth does what Dickens did in "David Copperfield," Butler in "The Way of All Flesh," and Maugham in "Of Human Bondage"—when he writes a frankly autobiographical book. Then there will be no conflict between the real center of interest and undistinguished persons like Rena and Kiv. Besides, the long story of love between August Derleth and Sac Prairie asks to be written.

SISTER MARIELLA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

William Howard Taft, Yale Professor of Law and New Haven Citizen. Frederick C. Hicks. Yale. $2.50.

PROFESSOR TAFT of Yale University has been neglected by biographers, who have written of Judge Taft, Commissioner Taft, Secretary of War Taft, President Taft, who lived justly in a comfortable interlude between the battles of Theodore Roosevelt and the troubles of World War I, and Chief Justice Taft of the unregenerated Supreme Court. Evicted from the White House by the New Freedom voters, Taft, '78, accepted the $5,000 chair of law offered by his alma mater. To the *Yale Daily News* he wrote: "I am coming back to Yale. . . . I venture to say that in the entire body there will be none with lighter heart or stronger hopes. . . . It is with no great claim to erudition that I come back to Yale, but it is with the earnest hope that from a somewhat extensive and varied experience I may have gleaned something which may be of use to the young men with whom I shall come in almost daily contact. There is need that our young men should appreciate the Constitution of the United States, under which we have enjoyed so many blessings and under which we must work out our political and economic salvation . . . know the value of our institutions and to appreciate the danger of accepting every nostrum that is offered and of abandoning those foundations without which our government could not have been." The 3,300 students staged a royal, improvised procession from the railway station to Memorial Hall to initiate Professor Taft, who spoke briefly and humbly his thanks to God for the opportunity to "help preserve what part of the nation is worth preserving and without which the nation cannot exist."

Professor Hicks writes of Taft's law courses; his outside lecture tours; his housing problems; his writings so laborious without research assistants; his examination on the Constitution when he was "made a voter"; his support of the League of Nations despite contempt for President Wilson; his first and coldly formal meeting with Roosevelt after their famous break when they were honorary pall-bearers for Professor Lounsbury, the rhetorician; his attendance at T. R.'s funeral from home to grave; his lasting appreciation of Roosevelt's sterling qualities and robust Americanism; and Taft's infectious chuckle and large chairs to fit the beam of a 340-pound conservative who was finally streamlined downward a hundredweight. This happy period, when he could speak his mind with freedom and candor, ended when President Harding called him to the Chief Justiceship of the Supreme Court on which he had desired to sit when McKinley and Roosevelt had other official plans for him. Not only for those of us who lived in and loved the Yale of that era but for any reader appreciative of the years before the Great Depression, this account of Taft of the Yale Law School should be fascinating. RICHARD J. PURCELL.

Chungking Listening Post. Mark Tennien. Creative Age. $2.50.

THE late Bishop James A. Walsh, Maryknoll's founder, had a publicity sense that was second only to his zeal. His efforts to give each of his seminarians a love for writing as well as skill in evangelizing, were remarkably successful. Bishop Walsh's own "Observations in the Orient," written more than twenty-five years ago, marked a new departure in mission literature. Priests' tales *could* make absorbing reading, and plead a cause without an outstretched basket. Ever since, Bishop Walsh's

COLUMBIA PRESS

A Distinguished Catholic Layman Writes a Vigorous Appraisal of...

The Germans in History

by

Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein

A highly provocative, critical analysis of the whole German past, from Tacitus to Hitler, written by a German, a follower of St. Augustine's and Hegel's philosophy of history, and a man with deep-rooted sympathy for democratic institutions. "Will interest the student of contemporary affairs."—*Book-of-the-Month Club News.* $5.00

At all bookstores

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Morningside Heights, New York 27

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

disciples have carried the twin weapons of cross and pen. It is a combination that accounts for the phenomenal growth of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society.

Father Mark Tennien's "Chungking Listening Post" is the latest in a long line of true adventure stories lived and written by Maryknoll's sons. For more than three and a half years Father Tennien was banker and contact man for the fifteen hundred Catholic missionaries in unoccupied China. He was an officially accredited war correspondent at Chiang Kai-shek's provisional capital, and his far-flung network of sources was the envy of his fellow-correspondents. As an unofficial auxiliary to the US Armed Forces, he was the familiar of generals and GI's alike.

"Chungking Listening Post" is a factual report, liberally dashed with humor. The incidents related are loosely connected, yet give a swift over-all picture of life in war-pressed China—civilian life, military life, political life. There is courage without bravado, weakness without shame, and charity everywhere. The Methodist missionary's wife, wrapping the nuns in kimonos while she dries their habits, contrasts with Father Moritz's bitter tears as he breaks under Chinese Communist torture. The misadventures of Father Wong, a clerical Peck's Bad Boy, are balanced by a sober first-hand report on the breakdown of negotiations between the Chungking government and the Yenan dissidents. The tremendous passive power of China to endure is in the background of every page.

"Chungking Listening Post" is not a great book—it is not intended to be. It is a thoroughly readable book, and a good step above a murder mystery as an evening's entertainment. As in all Maryknoll books, excellent photographs vivify the text. LEO J. TRESE.

Beethoven. Donald Francis Tovey. Oxford. $3.00.

SOMEONE new is always being proposed as the first "modern"; and I imagine that by now the field has been fully covered with critical nominations. If, after reading Tovey's book on Beethoven, I enter with a discovery of all we owe that great musician, I am certain it is not the first time his name has appeared. Surely, for better or worse, he has been recognized as a turning point in music: all music, both before and after him, having been many times cast out by the more philosophical critics. There are still, however, a few words left to be said on his place as an ancestor and his position as an artist.

Although it is not the fashion now to speak of the work as having a "natural form," a form "that grows like a blade of grass," the ideas are still much more in the air than one at first imagines. When we praise a work of art for its "inevitability," the idea of the natural seems to me at the root of our praise. And that, to what seems in retrospect logical and orderly to us, we impute naturalness, is also a piece of self-praise, and self-praise on a pernicious level. For here it is not even our taste we are flattering with our acceptance, but the whole process of our lives. "This suits me," we say, "and I can anticipate it without danger now that it has fitted itself in." The "natural" result of this is the dulling of our faculties for artistic enjoyment, since we do not extend ourselves to take things in, but narrow things down to our schedules. No, "inevitability" is not praise, it is the standard brand.

The form itself that a work might take in the eighteenth century was inevitable enough. It is in the quality of the danger an artist could introduce and resolve that the level of accomplishment can often be determined. (This is, of course, only the smallest hint about the nature of classical art, but it must suffice for here.) With Beethoven the shift to the "modern" begins—and eventually reaches to all the arts—when danger to the listener becomes an integral part of his form. For the natural growth of his thematic material, Beethoven had his notebooks; what he did *then* holds our permanent interest: his works. And his works represent the precarious compound of materials fixed by a choice of limitations that is the real mark of modern form. I say precarious, because it is only by following Beethoven a very long way indeed through what Tovey calls his "drama" that we can arrive at anything like an understanding of his accomplishment. The most recent example of this modernity is, of course, "Finnegans Wake."

Tovey's book remained unfinished at his death, yet what is completed is very much there and very much to the point. If I think he overestimated certain works of Beethoven's like "Die Weihe Des Hauses" in an effort to prove an originality of form where I, for one, only hear a pomposity of effect, that is a small matter. It is perhaps a more serious criticism of his case, for me, that he thought Brahms a comparable master of form; since I do feel that Brahms's position is directly opposed to Beethoven's. That is, Brahms, for the most part approaches form as a reason why rather than as a method how. The results are not unlike the Metropolitan Opera House during the summer; a musty expanse without musical action but with the names of the masters inscribed gratuitously on the proscenium. Brahms too is one of the first to move away from danger and toward what is now being labeled purity. That his purity reminds me of a miser counting his hidden gold, is perhaps only a personal antagonism; I like largesse in the arts. For the arts, though dangerous to cultivate or enjoy, are also offerings to God; and we all know the parable of the talents.

One last word about the book: it is ostensibly for specialists, but the amateur will certainly take away with him at least a hint of the magnitude of formal questions. And much more of a hint than I have been able to suggest very sketchedly in this review. At times, too, Tovey seems to be arguing with imaginary opponents. But his is the impatience of a man who enjoyed music and who was over-exposed to those who appreciate it.

CHESTER KALLMAN.

Hercules, My Shipmate. Robert Graves. Creative Age. $3.00.

ROBERT GRAVES has turned his remarkable talent once again to the Mediterranean. This time he has gone back to the time of the heroic myths of Greece and has taken the story of Jason and the Argo as a means to recreate the pre-Homeric world. This is one of the most obscure but also one of the most fascinating ages in the history of Greece, when the Aegean world was first becoming Greek and the anarchy of ancient polytheism was giving way to the deties of Olympus. His reconstruction is a remarkably vivid and skillful feat of scholarship combined with artistic talent. He has cast the story of Jason in the form of a historical novel which is supposed to have been written by a Greek of the second century B.C., before the remains of the Argo preserved at Corinth were destroyed in the Roman Sack of 146 B.C.

Any book by an artist so distinguished as Graves is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

worth attention. Yet the very success of his imaginative feat of reconstruction here leaves one wondering whether it was after all worth doing. To put first an objection which is not artistic but moral—the sexual violence of the oldest Greek myths and the sacred obscenities of the pre-Olympian fertility religions had a certain dignity in their own time and even as used by poets as late as Ovid, to whom these things were still natural. Graves's reconstruction is remarkably interesting to anyone with a sense of history. Yet these things revived by a modern artist with modern narrative technique seem brutal and will probably give offense to many: certainly they will give pause to a teacher who might wish to recommend the book to students.

The other objective is artistic. Graves has made the story of the Argo a picaresque novel, which is all that could be done with it. For by retelling the story with his astonishing vividnes, he has revealed the essential poverty and formlessness of the Jason legend itself. It is a long time ago that I read the "Argonautikon" of Apollonios of Rhodes. I supposed then that it seemed poor beside the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" because it was written by an Alexandrian poet of the second century B.C., when Greek culture was decadent. Graves has made me realize that no one could make Jason anything but an uninteresting, poor character, who has none of the grandeur of either spirit or destiny that distinguishes the other mythical heroes; while the story is a typical primitive legendary complex, a rambling, confused series of events, some of which are interesting, some trivial. "Hercules, My Shipmate" struck me, in fact, as one of the best arguments ever advanced for the existence of a poet named Homer. For the raw material of the Homeric poems must originally have been another such rambling, primitive complex as the Jason legends. If the Homeric epics have concentration and dramatic focus, richness of characterization, majesty of form and splendor of style, it must be because some very great artist put these qualities there. The Jason story, however, is to Homer as the plot of a Shakespearean source is to a play by Shakespeare. It is significant that the two greatest Greek poets who used the Jason story, treated it to ruthless surgery. Pindar compressed the whole story into a portion of a single ode while Euripides picked out a single episode from its last phase and built his play not on the character of Jason but on that of Medea. E. P. RICHARDSON.

Nine Strings to Your Bow. Maurice Walsh. Lippincott. $2.00.

FOR readers who like even their mystery stories to be literate, this novel by Maurice Walsh is recommended. But mystery readers who are thrilled only by a murder on every fourth page will find this rather slow going; besides the original murder, which happened a year before the story opens and which it is Detective Con Maddern's purpose to solve, there is only one other killing. However, the novel has: suspense, because the "Nine Strings" are the nine suspects every one of whom has several reasons for wanting to dispose of wealthy Mark Aiken; believable characterization, developed deftly by Walsh as the story progresses; much witty conversation (in a wide variety of accents) about and by these colorful characters—so interest never lags. The locale, a large estate in Scotland, is a natural setting for strange goings-on and night prowling of which there is plenty. I must admit that Con and his quiet partner, who is always

The Catholic Book Club presents a

CHRISTMAS GIFT OFFER

● Here is a splendid, budget-priced present that will really please all who enjoy good books.

● Ten dollars will bring to you, or your friends, five of the best of new books, a different volume each month for five months. Ten dollars is the entire cost and represents a saving to you of approximately 30% on the retail prices if these books were purchased separately.

● Each one of the five selections will be a new book in the original edition, complete and unabridged, published the month you receive it.

● All suitable new books are read by our Board of Editors whose names are listed below and they accept only the most worthwhile. This screening guarantees that you will receive only books of absorbing interest covering many subjects—fiction, biography, etc. It is a service we have been rendering to our many subscribers for over seventeen years.

● Start your gift subscription now with *Wartime Mission in Spain,* by Carlton J. H. Hayes (this one book would be $3.00 if purchased individually), to be followed by four more of the finest new Catholic books. If sent as a gift, we will forward special gift card with your name as donor.

● If you prefer a yearly membership, one new book a month for twelve months—the subscription is twenty-five dollars.

Board of Editors

John L. Belford, D.D. — *Wilfrid Parsons, S.J.*
James M. Gillis, C.S.P. — *Daniel Sargent*
Helen Walker Homan — *Phillips Temple*
Edward R. Moore, Ph.D. — *Michael Williams*

CATHOLIC BOOK CLUB, INC., Dept. C.
140 East 45th Street, New York 17, N. Y.

Please enter as a subscriber:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zone____State_____

☐ Enclosed find $10 for five months' membership (5 books).

☐ Enclosed find $25 for one year's membership (12 books).

The $10 (five months) offer is limited to new members.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CATHOLIC WORKER

(Member of Catholic Press Association)

A monthly paper dedicated to the cause of labor, the poor, the oppressed.

Written in the language of the man on the street, THE CATHOLIC WORKER is openly and unashamedly the champion of the have-nots.

Articles on strikes, civil liberties, war, national policy, labor unions, the land, the Works of Mercy.

House of Hospitality in New York and 40 affiliated groups and houses in various American cities.

Subscription, 25c per year. Foreign, 80c per year. Bundle orders, 10 or more copies, 1c per copy plus postage.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER, 115 Mott St., N. Y. C.

Please send me THE CATHOLIC WORKER for .... years. I am enclosing $..... My subscription starts with the ..... issue.

Name .....

Address .....

Post Office .....State.....

SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE
NOTRE DAME
HOLY CROSS, INDIANA
SCHOOL OF SACRED THEOLOGY
for Sisters and Lay-women
Prerequisites: A degree of Bachelor of Arts
A reading knowledge of Latin

ANNHURST COLLEGE
R. F. D. 2, Putnam, Connecticut
Accredited College, Conducted by the Sisters of the Holy Ghost
Liberal Arts, Music, Natural and Social Sciences, Pre-Medical, Teacher Training, Preparation for Social Service, Secretarial.
Address: THE DEAN.

IMMACULATA JUNIOR COLLEGE
Washington, D. C.
An accredited Catholic Institution for Women. Sisters of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Resident and Day Students. 2 year transfer course in Liberal Arts. Terminal courses in Home Crafts, Secretarial Sciences, General, Fine Arts.
SEMINARY—Four Year College Preparatory
Dunblane Hall—Grades 1 to 8. Address: The Secretary.

SCHOOL OF THE HOLY CHILD
SUFFERN, NEW YORK
Accredited. College preparatory and general course. Art, Music, Dancing, Dramatics. Outdoor sports. Resident and Day School. Separate Junior Department. In beautiful Ramapo Valley. 40 minutes from New York City. *Catalogue. Address The Prefect.* Phone: Suffern 765.

popping out of the background at the opportune moment, are much smarter than I at figuring out who dun it.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Eastward in Eden. Claude Silve. Creative Age. $2.50.

BY a literary sleight-of-hand, Claude Silve in this latest work identifies the much coveted children's world of contemporary fiction with the scene of man's existence before the Fall. It might have been a neat trick but it does not come off despite the author's lush romantic sense imagery and religio-Freudian symbolism.

"Eastward in Eden" is the story (translated from the French) of a little boy, Peter Green, kidnapped by gypsies from a middle class family and kept imprisoned in a ruined Moorish castle. In this earthly paradise, dwell in close harmony with the animal world and with each other, those eternal types of wisdom and dispossession, outlaw, slave and blind sage. Here Peter is happy to the depths of his sensitive soul and naturally pines away and dies when he is returned to his coldly conventional family. The novel is divided into two sections. The evaluation of Peter's experience from the outside, guessed at from its effects, is followed by an account of what actually happened to him. Such a method of narration is a useful device for suggesting atmosphere and deepened understanding but unfortunately the story is not strong enough to stand the strain. So too with the strange, diffuse metaphors which, though evocative, constantly impede the flow of the narrative. A peculiarly unsatisfactory work, full of unassimilated ideas and images which even the vagueness of fantasy cannot unify. PEGGY STERN.

Trees, Shrubs and Vines for the Northeastern United States. George Graves. Oxford. $3.00.

AN ATTRACTIVE handbook of several hundred species and types feasible for rock gardens, roadside planting and private gardens. These are chosen by the author out of the seven or eight thousand trees, shrubs and vines which can be grown in this part of the United States. The halftones are excellent. The text is descriptive as well as informative on such matters as cultivating, control of blights and insects, pruning and propagation.

CONTRIBUTORS

George DEAN is associate editor of the Sacramento *Bee*, Sacramento, Cal.

J. L. BENVENISTI is an English publicist who for several years has regularly contributed an English commentary to the pages of THE COMMONWEAL.

Regina HERZFELD teaches anthropology at the Catholic University, Washington, D. C., and is the wife of the noted physicist, Dr. Karl Herzfeld.

William Franklin SANDS, now a resident of Washington, D. C., served for many years in the Far East in the American diplomatic service.

Norah PIPER is at present living in Central America.

George DOHERTY, afer serving the Government on a mission to Argentina, is now connected with the banking business in New York.

Sister MARIELLA, O.S.B., teaches English at St. Benedict's College, St. Joseph, Minn. She is the editor of two recent volumes of Catholic short stories.

Richard J. PURCELL is professor of American history at the Catholic University and now on leave of absence.

Rev. Leo J. TRESE is pastor of St. Joseph's Church, Carleton, Mich.

Chester KALLMAN is a new contributer to THE COMMONWEAL and lives in New York. This is the first of a series of comments on music he is to contribute.

E. P. RICHARDSON is Director of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Peggy STERN is taking graduate work in English at Columbia University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED